

# About Speech, Language & Communication Needs (SLCN)



Speech, language and communication underpin everything we do – making our needs known, expressing our likes and dislikes, interacting with others and building relationships.

We often take these skills for granted, but many children struggle to communicate. They have speech, language and communication needs or SLCN.

A child with speech, language and communication needs:

- Might have speech that is difficult to understand
- They might struggle to say words or sentences
- They may not understand words that are being used, or the instructions they hear
- They may have difficulties knowing how to talk and listen to others in a conversation

Children may have just some or all of these difficulties; they are all very different.

Speech, language and communication are crucial for reading, learning in school, for socialising and making friends, and for understanding and controlling emotions or feelings.

SLCN is often called a 'hidden difficulty'. Many children with SLCN look just like other children, and can be just as clever. This means that instead of communication difficulties people may see children struggling to learn to read, showing poor behaviour, having difficulties learning or socialising with others. Some children may become withdrawn or isolated. Their needs are often misinterpreted, misdiagnosed or missed altogether.